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The MINISTER'S QUARTERLY

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Editor's Note

At the meeting of our General Council at Omaha in June, Dr. Fred Hoskins of the First Congregational Church, Oak Park, Illinois, was unanimously elected as our new Minister and Secretary. We invited him as he assumed his new office to use the pages of the QUARTERLY to send a word of greeting to all of his ministerial brethren. This word is presented on the opposite page.

To him, in turn, we bespeak our friendship and our will to hold up his hands in the important work he is undertaking in behalf of our fellowship.

A Privileged Time

The Editor of THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY has kindly invited me to use the good offices of this excellent journal to send a greeting to the Ministers of our Fellowship. For the courtesy I am profoundly grateful, for since my election to be the Secretary and Minister of the General Council I have longed for a way to express my gratitude for the honor which has been shown me and especially to invite your prayers and cooperation for the task which is ours in common.

While already it is my privilege to know many of you personally, there are yet hundreds whom I have not yet had the privilege of meeting. I shall make it my business to come as rapidly as I may to rejoice in counting them, too, as personal friends. I dare hope that they will assist me in this when they are in New York and in such other ways as will occur to them.

Dr. Daniel Jenkins in his *The Strangeness of the Church* says that perhaps the strangest thing about the Church is its power of renewal. Now there are many things about our Congregational Christian Fellowship in these latter years which suggest that there is a significant renewal taking place in our churches. There is a renewal of enthusiasm for our missionary task. (Notice the increase in the support of our missionary agencies.) There is a renewal of interest in our evangelistic task. (Notice the growth in our Sunday Schools and in accessions by confession of faith.) There is a renewal of emphasis upon worship properly conceived as preaching the Word, praise, prayer, and the administration of the sacraments. (Notice so many evidences). There is renewal of interest and increase in competence in theology. (Notice the good work of THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY, for one thing.) There is a renewal of concern for an understanding of the Church as revealed in the Scriptures. (Notice our conferences and Seminary instruction and books aplenty.) There is a renewal of our sense of responsibility for the unity of the Church. (Notice, of course, the step taken in this direction at Omaha where it was overwhelmingly voted to proceed with the Union with the Evangelical and Reformed Church.)

You may go right down the list, and I have not done that, of the criteria of a true church of Christ and it is patently clear that in our churches—not Congregational Christian alone—there is a renewal of major proportions and of significant dimensions. This is a privileged time for all of us to serve the Church and in whatever way I can serve you, please command me.

—FRED HOSKINS

Comment

—from our readers

On "Congregationalism"

If it will not unfairly lengthen the debate, may I add my own concern for Congregationalism?

Thayer Greene is quite right in suggesting that geographical and sociological conditions of life gave considerable support to the autonomy of local churches in 1700. But Dr. Gray strikes closer to the deep roots of Congregationalism when he points us toward "Christian experience" as opposed to sociology.

It was not geographic convenience that in an earlier day and in another land made the little congregation at Scrooby Manor a Church. It was an experience of the risen Christ in the midst of His people that did it. Those people met without benefit of ecclesiastical blessing or episcopal sanction and later in covert defiance of the recognized Church; and yet they felt the amazing power of the Master's presence in their midst, bending their wills to Him and guiding them. They HAD to be a Church, because Jesus was there, just as He had promised!

The freedom they treasured had nothing to do with distance or culture—it had to do with their Lord. Because its only meaning and purpose was to make them free to obey Christ Jesus—the one authority they recognized.

Certainly the doctrine of authority has been, and will quite rightly continue to be the most central and persistent concern in the present discussion of the nature of the Church in Congregationalism. One side tends to speak of "democracy" and "freedom of the local Church," and the other of "the Lordship of Christ." But on both sides there is a

(*Continued on page 39*)

On "Baptism"

In the June '56 issue of THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY Ernest A. Rueter attempts to set forth the theological basis for the rite of Christian baptism. He succeeds admirably in this attempt. The theology which he suggests is clearly stated and securely grounded, both in the Holy Scriptures and in the corporate life of the Church as the Community of the People of God.

The question raised by the theology which Mr. Reuter has so well stated is this. How can the practice of infant baptism possibly be reconciled with such a theology? For instance, Mr. Reuter makes the statement that baptism, according to Paul's letter to Colassae, "is a symbol for dying to the old and rising to the new

(*Continued on page 39*)

On "Communion"

I want to congratulate you in selecting Chalmers Coe as contributor to the Theology section of THE QUARTERLY. I profited very much from reading his article "Not Because You May, But Because You Must."

Paragraphs I and II were very soul-stirring, but I was left with an empty feeling after reading his remarks under the third section in which he makes the statement that the Eucharist helps us to remember the Jesus who, one night in the past, prepared to die for men. He was right in rejecting the rational view that the Communion Service is merely eating and drinking in memory of Jesus (in the same way as you could have a banquet in memory of Abraham Lincoln). I was

(*Continued on page 40*)

CONCERNING THE WAYS OF THOUGHT

by GAIUS GLENN ATKINS

The following lines represent the last writing of Dr. Atkins. They were handed to us, by Dr. Atkins' daughter, in the form of an original draft written in Dr. Atkins' own hand in a notebook. The first draft was never completed. To the long-time friends of Gaius Glenn Atkins, however, these his last lines will have a unique significance. They stand as a symbol of the faith, the insight, and the sensitive awareness to both the Eternal and the contemporary which characterized this man as a person and as a writer. — EDITOR

* * * *

BLAISE PASCAL LIVED AND DIED and made his brilliant contribution to literature and theology within the brief span of the seventeenth century. The Pilgrims were getting themselves more or less comfortably settled at Plymouth when he was born in 1623. He died at the age of thirty-five years. Few men have undertaken so much, or left so much so brilliantly and appallingly unfinished. He laid little hold upon the mind of his own time, but he has had a persistent and creative power over the minds of generations since. He came deeply under the influence of Calvinism and spent his too brief life half lost in the speculations of the philosophy to which St. Paul and John Calvin have left their memories and their names.

He felt deeply the corruption of human nature, which he could not sufficiently stress. He saw the only cure in the Grace mediated through Jesus Christ. Through these regions his mind played endlessly, with brilliant flashes of insight which made his lectures but thinly veiled lights in literature. Few works are more fascinating to read than his. His work leaves you never lost and wondering as to what you have read. But Pascal was fundamentally the thinker. His most famous passage deals with man the thinker. "A man is but a wind blown reed, the most feeble in nature: but he is a reed which thinks. The world does not need to arm itself against him. A drop of nature or a breath of vapor is sufficient to slay him. But when the universe has annihilated a man, he, the man, has this advantage over the universe. Men know the fate they face—the universe knows nothing. Strive then to think well. Behold the fundamental principle of morality."

For Pascal, then, man is the "thinker." He does not seek the sources of human thought, nor the depths from which it issues, nor indeed the laws which control it. But his mind plays brilliantly over all the possibilities and contradictions of human thought as he seeks to organize his always unfinished systems. But the play of his mind is brilliant, stimulating and always unfinished; which in part, one may take it, is the secret of his appeal to our own time.

And yet consider what this thinking reed has done. He has built his orders and his civilizations, a reed against the universe — and victorious because it thinks. He has measured the orbits of the stars and calculated their heights and distances, and made and unmade civilizations.

* * * *

Thought has its ways, and in the end it both creates and obeys its systems. In the end the major thought orders make and unmake civilizations and so rule the world. And here should be the main function of the preacher. He is the "thinker" in the most wonderful and delicate of regions: the mysteries of the moral, set to the music of speech.

Its power is awesome. This power of right speech. For consider what right speech has built beneath the structures, fleeting or enduring, of all civilization. The thing to be done is a vision to begin with. Some wafting of the possible and the yet unachieved across the horizons of life, a thought and as yet nothing more. Then it becomes a plan; and then an act; and then a pyramid or a song. And with all this the preacher deals. There is no vocation which includes so much, so simply.

But all this is generated in thought, then garmented with words, then made articulate in deeds. It is well then that a preacher should know the authority of deeds as well as the power of words and the influence of thought behind and beneath it all. It was to this that Pascal gave the brief questioning splendor of his unmatched mind. And yet all he said and so soon left unfinished was his tribute to thought. His Pensees now and then shone like stars in their orbits. His mind is good to know and live with.

* * * *

The window by whose light these increasingly wandering editorials are written look out upon the old Moravian burying ground. It is well kept and full of memories and lengthening history. The tomb stones are flat upon the earth, laid that way, they say, not to tell the indians how many are dead there. But there are indians there, too. There is now a faint touch of green under the rather faint touch of sunlight—a prophecy of a brighter green and vernal beauty. The wonder of it is how quietly it is done. And how much is done in this quiet. It is a testimony to the power of quiet change, as though our world order could be changed in that way, if only we would let it be thus changed. For the great transformations come as spring comes, and the quiet things have thus their transforming way. That, too, is an aspect of Pascal's principle of thought. So it touches and transforms. Nature has her own way of house cleaning. As we watch the winter suns are gone, and the rhythmic process renews the world.

* * * *

I am trying to say that the great changes come quietly and need time and patience. If only we could lure men to these quiet ways. This editor has written many things on the Grace and gift of getting old; especially on the installment plan. Here a little and there a little . . . .

THE MINISTER AND THE DENOMINATION

TOWARD AN UNDERSTANDING OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

* * * *

The outstanding characteristic of our church life today is the constant expansion of church school facilities to meet the need of a steadily increasing enrollment. This is so throughout the country in all types of churches. Even so we are scarcely keeping up with the demands. And the need for trained teachers is nearly as acute as in public education.

All this brings the subject of Christian education into sharp focus. Ministers must take an intent look at the type of foundation being laid for the churchmanship of tomorrow.

In this issue we present, in part, the story of what our own Christian Education Division is doing to provide adequate material for the great opportunity, and something of the philosophy of education and the theology behind it.

We commend the three articles in this department to the earnest study of our ministers. They are produced by persons of lay experience in the field of religious education.

HARRY T. STOCK, who discusses "What Christian Education Teaches," has for many years been General Secretary of the Division of Christian Education of the Board of Home Missions; CARL A. HANSEN is Associate Superintendent of the Connecticut Conference; and MILDRED C. WIDBER is Secretary of Leadership and Field Program of the Board of Home Missions.

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Christian education is Christian nurture.

WHAT CHRISTIAN EDUCATION TEACHES

by HARRY T. STOCK

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IS one means by which the Church proclaims the Christian gospel, seeks to produce intelligent disciples of Jesus Christ, renews itself in every generation, and endeavors to fulfill its contemporary mission. Christian education tries to help each person achieve that degree of spiritual maturity which is possible at each successive stage of physical and mental growth. Although the objectives of Christian education are those of the Church itself, curriculum materials prepared by various denominations differ in important respects. Each such series represents the distinctive emphases of its denominational educational agency. In every instance, the materials are planned primarily for the churches of a particular order.

Certain denominations expect their members to assent to the doctrines of their respective creeds. They are teaching the young for informed membership in their own churches. The courses of these denominations are so written as to transmit the maximum amount of biblical content, of church history and of their own creedal interpretations. A main purpose is to leave a large deposit of knowledge regarding their Christian tradition in the memory of the pupils, and to help them to understand and accept their theological heritage.

Another denomination states its purpose in terms of "enabling children, young people, and adults to respond *now* to the demanding and reconciling acts of Almighty God in their daily lives." The immediate concern is with the actual response of growing persons, the response of their total personalities especially in the relationships of life. This church relies largely upon family attendance at the Sunday morning service of worship and upon worship in the homes to give cumulative meaning to the affirmations of the Prayer Book.

Attractive booklets are provided for the pupils, and it is hoped that parents and children will read them together in their homes. The teachers in the church school are given no detailed week-by-week sequence of lesson interpretation and procedure by which large areas of Christian tradition are explained to children. Rather, they are asked to study a manual of suggestions by which the leader may make a "group" of the class, and engage the pupils in intimate and informal conversation and purposeful activities with reference to the goal of the quarter's unit. The primary effort is to help teachers to become intelligent and committed Christians who will establish and maintain such relationships with their pupils as will result in integrated, "whole," creative personalities. It is believed that by guiding boys and girls into a relationship of mutual trust the true purpose of Christian education will be fostered: that the pupils will be in right relationships with God and other persons within the fellowship and faith of the Church.

Another widely used series of courses includes a balanced selection of biblical and historical content, carefully graded to the learning potentialities of each age group. The courses are developed less in terms of biblical or historical theology than of the meaning of the ethical teachings of Christianity. The teacher's guides interpret biblical content with relevance to the day-by-day life situations characteristic of the various age levels. A desired outcome is the development of strong Christian character and of a prophetic concern for social justice.

In our Congregational Christian program we seek to initiate persons of all ages into the fellowship and experience of the Church, and to nurture them in its heritage and mission, so that they are enabled to mature as Christian personalities.

During the earliest years, the parents in the home and the teachers in the church school are the most important part of the curriculum. What the adult is and does is the main source of the child's understanding of God. When the parent or teacher reflects the love of the fatherly God, and truly understands each boy and girl and accepts him as he is, and the child in turn responds affirmatively to that love and trust, something significant happens deep within the child's personality. He is being "saved" in the essential meaning of that Christian doctrine. He is being and becoming Christian, for he is in right relationship with the family and the church group and with God. And he has that readiness which makes further learning possible.

All education includes the progressive appropriation of the great learnings of the past. Already within the fellowship of the Church, the child needs to be introduced, by gradual stages, to the heritage of the Christian community. Biblical materials are arranged in a carefully graded system which corresponds to the successive stages of the pupil's growth. The Scripture is interpreted in terms of its eternal Christian meanings and of its relevance to immediate and future experience. These meanings are to be lived as well as understood; indeed, the understanding is largely in the living. All study of the Bible should help teachers and pupils to know more and more about what God has done for us, is still doing for us, and is asking us to do and be. The desired result is that all of us will love God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our strength, and with all our minds, and our neighbors as ourselves. In group study and worship and purposeful activity, persons of all ages will also come to understand Christian symbols, art, sacraments, festivals, and the biblical and historical theological affirmations of our Christian faith.

True fellowship within the Church necessitates participation in its mission. From very early years, children become aware of human needs and show a concern for neighbors near and far. Pilgrim Series is more than a series of courses for class study plus family books for use in the homes. It includes, each quarter, certain significant all-church events or projects, so that children will know themselves to be participants with young people and adults in the life and work of the Church. Frequent opportunity to help further the Christian world mission is a necessary aspect of the learning process, and it is a normal expression of the reality of personal commitment to God through Jesus Christ.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION is Christian nurture, a means of helping persons to mature as Christians. Those who prepare the material for pupils, parents and teachers take account of authentic discoveries in the field of the dynamics of personality. Such knowledge is part of God's disclosure of how he works within us and through us. By attested methods of group activity, pupils are enabled to move from one stage of spiritual maturity to another. A child of five can *be* a five year old Christian. Through relationships of love and understanding and by wise guidance he will be enabled to *become* a more intelligent and consistent Christian. From year to year he will better *understand* his status and responsibilities as a child of his Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer. And throughout the years he can bear increasing *witness* to the Christian faith which he has experienced and which has larger meaning as he worships, studies and works within the fellowship of the Church.

Their main emphases and use.

PILGRIM SERIES IN THE CHURCHES

by MILDRED C. WIDBER

"EVERYTHING WE DO in our churches is aimed to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to tell the good news about God and the relations we may have with him and with one another. Pilgrim Series is planned so that persons of all ages may come into right relationships with God and continue to grow in that relationship."

So reads the first paragraph of the pictorial brochure which presents the plan and purpose of the curriculum materials prepared specifically for use in our own Congregational Christian Church. A careful reading of that brochure will bring to any minister a clear understanding of what these materials offer for the teaching ministry of his church.

In addition, I have been asked to state the main emphasis of these materials and to tell something of their use in the churches. Pilgrim Series has four main emphases: The Church and Its Work; Commitment to Christ; Understanding the Bible, and Christian Living. A three year cycle makes it possible for each emphasis to have at least a three month period for use in study, worship, and fellowship. The fall and winter courses, each year are planned on one of the three emphases: The Church (this year); Life of Christ (1957-58); The Bible (1958-59). At the older age levels, the winter courses continue the study of the fall, thus giving some six months to a study of the Life of Christ; knowledge and use of the Bible; knowledge of the Christian Church and our place in it today. Thus real and lasting learning experience takes place.

These emphases are reflected, too, in the courses for all ages. This fall all members of the church school, except the very youngest, will be studying about the church, its heritage and its work. Though all students will be studying the same subject, there is a separate course planned to meet the needs and abilities of each age group.

A kindergarten child must first feel at home in his own church (A Star Shone); the primary child is ready to understand something about personal and group worship and the Christian meaning of Christmas (The Bells Ring Out); the lower junior (How The Story of Jesus Traveled) and older juniors (How Our Church Grew) begin to know their heritage through stories about great leaders of the Christian Church; junior highs understand something of the sweep and continuity of the church as it is dramatized through the courage and daring of real people (Builders of the Church); Senior Highs study the growth of the Christian Church from Pentecost to the Reformation (After The Apostles); and adults spend both the fall and winter in a study of the Congregational Christian churches. In like manner, one could describe the distinctive course for each three months of the year, winter, spring, and summer, over the three year period.

But Pilgrim Series is far more than just a carefully planned and comprehensive series of church school courses. The churches making best use of Pilgrim Series report especially on its unique features.

They speak of its help for teacher training. One local church worker writes: "If they only knew, Pilgrim Series would be even more successful in the smaller church. It not only inspires and instructs children, it inspires and instructs teachers. I have a wonderful faculty, most of

them inexperienced, who perform like veterans with it."

They tell of what happens to people who really are touched by the message of its courses. A kindergarten child came home and asked her daddy to take down her story of Jesus! Her words, "Jesus was loving, kind, and true" showed she had felt the truth of the stories and conversation in her group.—A letter told of a husband and father who found it difficult to control his temper. But—"I had been reading and studying this course, and just thought it was about time I put it to work." This family's account of a new climate in the home showed a deepened understanding of Christian living.

They write about the deep, warm Christian fellowship they experience when they come together for some one of the all church events, planned for all ages. For many small churches, the Gospel readings on a Sunday in Lent over a period of several hours was a deeply moving experience. Letter after letter spoke of the participation of young people and even older juniors in this reading; of the response of the whole congregation, and especially of the older people.

They are finding the resources for The Parents' Class a helpful guide. One church wrote of a class of young parents who brought their children for their classes, and stayed on for their own discussion over a cup of coffee. The Parents' Class material was their guide.

It is still too soon to report on the use of the *Family Resource Book* in its new dress, though we have reports on the Family Book as we have known it these last years. Teachers have found it invaluable for additional resource material and stories; families have appreciated its guidance for worship, and its discussion of the questions so commonly asked by children about God; about death; about Jesus, and the events of his life. And one Director wrote about the new book, *YOUR FAMILY and YOUR CHURCH,* "We all heartily approve the new format and the current book. We are planning to distribute these Family Books to each family who attend our Back-To-Church-School Sunday Family Service. This service will be followed by a coffee hour when we shall have a chance to talk informally about this book."

These unique features: *Planned Leadership Education; Family Resource Books; Parents' Class Guidance; All Church Fellowship and Worship Events* have lead many churches to write: "We are finding a new sense of togetherness in our Christian Education Program." "Though each class has its own course, we welcome the many ways in which we can all feel part of the whole. This is especially true when we come together for one of the all-church events."

Statistics show between 55% and 60% of our churches using some or all of Pilgrim Series. Experience in working with the churches shows that its use cannot be "pegged" to one size church, one type church, or certain geographical areas. Any church that uses these materials for what they are, an imaginative, complete church - and - home Christian Education program, finds in its own experience a new vitality, enthusiasm, and growth in Christian faith and fellowship.

THE BIBLE IN THE PILGRIM SERIES

by CARL A. HANSEN

"WHY DON'T OUR church schools teach the Bible any more?" is a question frequently addressed to me. Sometimes the tone of voice is accusing, nearly always it indicates a conviction that in the questioner's day the Bible really was taught in the Sunday Schools. Often there follows criticism of particular curriculum materials, including the Pilgrim Series. Let's talk about it a little.

Somehow the idea has gone abroad that in generations past when church schools were often called "Bible Schools" a particularly good job of teaching the Bible was done and that today the "modern" church school produces biblical illiterates. Neither of these conclusions is borne out by the facts. Except for those instances in which Bible study was a regular practise in the home, the view expressed by Dr. James Smart, when he was editor of curriculum materials for the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., is more accurate: "Curiously, children trained under the second type of program i.e. the more recent with emphasis on the learner and the ways persons learn), in which the Bible is not central, often come away with a better knowledge of the Bible than those who have been permitted to study nothing but the Bible. The outcome depends not on the quantity of time that is spent in Bible study, but upon the quality of the approach." It is my own observation that our children in a good church school using the Pilgrim Series, or equally good curriculum materials, "learn more Bible" in the sense of understanding, retaining and using than I did in my Lutheran "Bible School" as a boy.

By any standard measure of the learner's ability to comprehend and retain content at any given age, the Pilgrim Series contains more Bible than can be used in any but the most exceptional church schools. There just simply is more than enough. However, the emphasis is on "quality of approach," rather than on amount of material, because the underlying concern is that the Bible shall become truly the living and meaningful work for the learner. Determined that coming generations shall be better versed in the Bible, the Division of Christian Education planned the Pilgrim Series with almost complete concentration on the Bible for one-third of the whole, and at every other point has related the emphases to the Bible wherever possible. Given devoted and well-prepared teachers using the materials in this three-year recurring cycle of emphasis on Bible, Jesus Christ, and the Church, coming generations should come to know the Bible more thoroughly and comprehensively than the children of previous generations; but even greater gains may be expected in the influence of the Book in their lives. Mere superficial reading and rote memorizing do not constitute "knowing" the Bible. The gains sought through the Pilgrim Series are to be measured in the residue truly retained and made effective in daily living.

Some of the marks of this "quality approach" in the Pilgrim Series are these: First of all, it recognizes that the Bible is not to be seen as an end in itself, but as the chief means to the end of knowing God and His will as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments, but especially in Jesus Christ. It is necessary, therefore, to stress the learner's ability to comprehend in order that understanding and commitment may come at each

stage of learning, instead of being deferred to some "adult" stage.

Secondly, this means that all material, including the biblical, must be chosen with reference to the learner's ability to grasp it. The choice of the Bible material to be included at any level is guided by those who know the child's ability to understand, his vocabulary level, and the effect certain kinds of concepts will have upon his intellectual and emotional growth. For instance, it recognizes that a child's knowledge of time and geography is extremely limited at the kindergarten level and, thus, material requiring understanding of geography and the relation of periods of time is left to a later date. Again, it means that those parts of the Bible that present God as requiring the conqueror to destroy all the inhabitants of a captured city, including innocent women and children is deferred to later maturity lest it develop a hate of God rather than love for Him.

Thirdly, it sees that some Biblical material is so adult in its meanings that only by severely distorting it, and, therefore, actually being untrue to the Bible, can it be used. It could well be, for instance, that one reason some men have not read the story of Jonah since they were children is because it was given to them when they could not grasp its real meaning and they have, as a consequence, relegated it to the realm of the fairy story for children, or have said, "Oh, I got that in Sunday School." It is well for all of us to remember that the Bible is a book of adult experiences, for the most part, and that there is little or no evidence of its having been used directly with children in teaching, even by Jesus, himself. Certainly, it is tragic that so much of its most penetrating insights are ignored by adults when found in that material they think they "studied" in Sunday School.

Fourthly, it acknowledges the fact that so far as content is concerned the learning of biblical material proceeds much in the same way as the learning of any factual material. It is constructed, therefore, and advocates methodology in keeping with the best known educational procedures. Of course, the acceptance of the Bible's teachings by the will, so as to lead to that kind of love for it that results in commitment, is another matter, and one too often overlooked. This depends upon matters beyond methodology, not least of which is the attitude and example of parents and teachers.

In the fifth place, preference is given to that material that can be used by the learner in the faith that such is the best assurance we can have that the Bible will be used throughout a lifetime. Rather than accepting the premise that great passages should be committed to memory because it may then return in later life as a source of consolation in extremity, it argues that habitual use of the Bible in meaningful ways at each age-level is a better guarantee of continued use, just as to learn to meet one's childhood joys and heartaches with Christian praise and fortitude is the best way to develop resources for meeting such events in succeeding periods. Perhaps the words of Mildred and Frank Eakin in "Your Child's Religion," page 62, help to make this position clear: "Only as the Bible verse . . . make(s) contact with something in the child's experience which gives it meaning and warmth, only thus is there substantial ground for hoping that it may be a force for good in him." The editors of the Pilgrim Series have made their selections on this ground and have provided adequate helps for the teacher in making real this contact with experience.

Far from giving comfort to those who would belittle the importance of the Bible in Christian nurture, if there be any such in our midst, or weaken its influence on the life of the growing Christian, your Division of Christian Education has set its editorial feet on a new, and, I believe, a more promising road toward the greater understanding and love of the Bible through the more meaningful use of it at each age level.

A Song of Grace

GOD IN MY HEART will not let go
The sheep who from His pastures run
Into the tangled lands below
Towards meadows green and flushed with sun,
Where pleasures poison to the tongue
Destroy the silly sheep with ease:
Though I the shepherd's song must sing
And call them back, because I please.

The tigers in me who maraud
My secret paths, my hidden dark,
Who prowl my blood and spring with fire
That brands me with black passion's mark;
God hunts these hunters down instead,
And feeds them more than what they lose
On Passion's Cup and Passion's Bread:
I eat, but only if I choose.

His arm has comfort for the lamb
That crippled in my forests lies,
Dangered by all the deaths I am,
In fear of all my mysteries.
He climbs the cliffs I dare not climb,
He dares the woods I dare not dare,
He saves the innocence in me:
But only if, like Him, I care.

And when from perches in the mind
My sparrows forage for the sun,
And break against the clumsy wind
And short-winged fall, collapsed, undone;
He gently with a Grace of hand
Persuades them back to placid earth,
And comforts me on human land:
But only if I know its worth.

God in my heart I know like air
Before the seasons made air sad,
But there is sadness in me where
His love prepares me to be glad.
He is a Child whose simple song
Exclaims delight acrossmy field,
But never a tune I hold for long,
Except I hear His joy and yield.

—ARNOLD KENSETH

THE MINISTER AND HIS THEOLOGY

THIS IS THE ISSUE which includes the second installment of Chalmers Coe's article on Holy Communion. Mr. Coe has concluded his ministry at the Mount Vernon Church in Boston and has joined the faculty of the Hartford Seminary Foundation.

A year ago, Harland G. Lewis, pastor of the Church of Christ in Hanover, New Hampshire, delivered a paper to the mid-west Regional Meeting on Evangelism. There was great response and we are extremely happy to be able to publish it.

Speaking of letters, I am extremely happy with the response which we have had so far. We are indeed, I think, in the beginning stages of a theological conversation through correspondence. In this issue you will find the reflections and comments of the Reverend Alvin J. Beachy, pastor of the First Congregational Church in Somerville, Massachusetts, the Reverend Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., pastor of the North Congregational Church in Williamsburg, Massachusetts and the Reverend Jorma Mannero, pastor of the West Quincy Congregational Church in Quincy, Massachusetts. Perhaps this is the time and place to say that a cordial welcome awaits all letters, approximately five hundred words in length, containing reflections on articles or letters. Letters should be in the hands of the editor within a month after the publication of the previous issue.

Once again there is a poem by Arnold Kenseth, pastor of the South Congregational Church in Amherst, Massachusetts.

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THE EVANGELISTIC IMPERATIVE OF OUR CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

by HARLAND G. LEWIS

LAST SUMMER I ATTENDED an ordination council in a little village on the coast of Maine. When it came time for me to question the candidate, I asked, "What justifies our Christian mission to other cultures and faiths, and to those whose lives swirl busily and uncomprehendingly around our Churches but do not enter in?" The young candidate hesitated, and spoke of brotherhood, truth, morality, service. The hour was late, the session long; I did not press my question, but I was uneasy. As we left together, I expressed my uneasiness to a friend, who said, "We have Christ, and no other faith and no culture has Him." If the candidate had said simply this, we would have known he was starting where he must begin to find the Motive and the content of his faith.

This is true for all of us. We ask "What is our evangelistic imperative?" We must say at once that if we are to stand in the Apostolic tradition, to have the saving power the Apostles knew, preach the Gospel they proclaimed, we cannot stray far from the center of the Apostolic faith—God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself. We must speak, as they did, as people forgiven by God's grace; proclaim a Cross and know that Christ died for us; that we are given a Gospel of redemption. We must know we speak not primarily to ignorant man, or confused man, or lonely man, but to sinful man, with the only power that goes to the depths of his sinfulness and makes him new. These things we must know not because we have read it, but because it has happened to us.

We need remind ourselves that whenever the Church has departed from her commission to proclaim Christ and His Cross, she has been weak and the world has swarmed in upon her and well-nigh overwhelmed her. But when she has been strong in Christ, she has advanced upon the world with a witness to and an embodiment of a Holy Love that redeems.

At once I can hear the cry raised, "He uses all the outworn words, the theological jargon with no power to persuade or save. How can we speak to the world with such a vocabulary?" Rightly asked. But I would speak within the bonds of the Covenant, in the family of faith, to use the great words which our experience should have filled with meaning. To those as yet outside the experience of redemption, these words may be dry sounds. But not, God forbid, to us. These great words of grace, sin, redemption, and salvation, have pale substitutes in other jargons, but they alone convey the fullness. Here we speak within the family, and we use the family language.

What Is Our Special Mission?

So the question we ask ourselves, within the family, is, to paraphrase our title: Where in Christ's whole Church do we find our special mission and witness as Congregational Christians in this time?

First, in seeking our answer, we must know ourselves to be a product of the Reformation which released the power of the Gospel in response to certain needs at a certain juncture in history. We are not here unique. Every member of the family of Christ's Church bears upon it the marks of the time and the need which called it forth. This is part of the genius of Protestantism, and the eternal relevance of the Gospel. The keyword which conveys the most distinctive characteristic of historic Congregationalism is "freedom." For our fathers, having been set

free in Christ, through the reopened Bible, their common witness, and the dynamic of the Reformation, were driven to express this freedom in a worship which could not be confined in established ways. They sought to shape a faith which would not fit in established creeds. They wanted a freedom which was not possible in their established society. And we are proud of our Pilgrim Faith, of those in whose hearts Christ found lodgment, and to whose lives He gave freedom. They were willing to suffer for it, and to work to give it concrete expression in church, in faith, in society. From them has stemmed strong influence in American democracy, a mighty concern for education and the freeing of the mind, a social conscience, a continually stubborn insistence on freedom. It is our heritage, our testimony, our destiny, to be a people of freedom.

Are We Still Free?

But now see the danger. This was a freedom found by men who were made free in Christ. How easy to remember the freedom and forget its source. How easy to build a structure in freedom, and then to worship that structure. True freedom is always secondary, and follows captivity by Christ. So the question is, are we imprisoned within patterns born of a particular time in history, whose source we have neglected? Or are we still truly free to go to the Apostolic Gospel and renew ourselves for a witness to this time?

Is our concern first with freedom, in polity, speech, and thought—or first with Christ, and then inevitably with the freedom He confers? Freedom has audacity and power, when it is not an end in itself; it is dead when it becomes an idol.

To this question, then, as to whether or not we can in our place and time bring the Gospel to bear upon the needs of this age, or whether we have largely an inherited witness called forth by a bygone day, we must address ourselves by asking several further questions.

First: who are we now, in this hour, this group called Congregational-Christian? Second: What is the Gospel we proclaim? Third: what are the needs of this age?

Who Are We?

First, then: Who are we? We are a very respectable people, who fall largely within certain social, economic, and political groups. Our witness to the world, then, is strained through a certain segment of the population and culture; the light is filtered through our prism. We put our frame around Christ.

We must be honest about this. Not many months ago, a man in our town came to our Church several times. He was in search of help. Drink, family troubles, and general dissolution had brought him near the edge of disaster. What I had to say within the context of our Church did not speak to his need. Our fellowship did not go deep enough to heal his hurt. Those same Sunday mornings may have had meanings for college students and professors, but not to a needy alcoholic. But not long after, he came to me a new man—the Jehovah's Witnesses had taken him in. He spoke of God's gift to him of new life. You can see it in him today. He used his vacation to go to New York to be baptized at a Witness convention: before he would have gone to New York only on a debauch. And when he talks of his new life, God's gift, I understand him. And all I can say is, "Thank God that this man met God reaching for him, and that our Church was not the only instrument God had." And, further, you see, thank God that He is reaching for men always through other channels than our Congregational - Christian churches. This makes me humble. And it says to me sharply that we must always ask ourselves whether the Gospel is mutilated and Christ is diminished when

preached in the context of Congregationalism. If only we keep asking this question we shall be the more faithful to our commission. Our freedom just means continual Reformation before the fullness of the Gospel. We must see that if we have made out witness primarily to a certain group, bearing the marks of our historic heritage as limits, we come near denying our Lord.

What Is Our Gospel?

Second: what is our Gospel, then? Here it is easy to be too simple, and to say that we preach Christ and Him crucified, the answer to every need in every time. True, and yet not quite true. Too much of evangelism hides behind unexamined words and meekly accepted patterns. Too much of evangelism demands, not a changed life, but acceptance of an intellectual statement of faith, or agreement with a formula.

But nevertheless we begin with Christ. Not Christ defined or described, however beautifully. Not Christ logically presented, however compellingly. All this merely exhibits Him, as a museum piece, embalmed in a creed.

But it is Christ evangelically irresistible, in Whom is God seeking us, with Holy Love and matchless grace, who is our Gospel.

For one reason above all ought this be real for us: for we are people of The Bible. It was through the reopened Bible, and lives kindled at its flame, that Christ set free our fathers. Our Bible lives for us still. It is no mere history of Israel, or history of religion, or, least of all, a record of man's search for God. It is a history of revelation, of Grace, of redemption. There is an active, aggressive, relentless Force in it—which is God. In it God speaks to his people, through Moses, Amos, Isaiah, even Cyrus. In it God seeks men in Christ. In it is Christ come home to Paul, and the great fact of God in Christ being prolonged in history through the Apostles and their Church.

In Christ—living in Apostles, Bible, and Church, we have not just the beginning of an unfolding drama of redemption; nor even the exhibition in him of God's ideal for our attainment. But he is for us God's act, final, and complete. Then, now, always. Our evolution is within Him, not to Him or from Him. And God's seeking grace in Him does not merely edify us, instruct us, inspire us: it changes us. What he does for us is to redeem us. Can we use that word within the family and have it known in full meaning: redeemed—forgiven, accepted, reconciled? We discover that the Kingdom does not await our building: it awaits our entrance. We know that the King has come, and reigns over His Kingdom now. God has given. We must possess. And we must proclaim.

We must proclaim. To be effective in history, God's saving act must be continually proclaimed by the saved. It must be interpreted in thought and speech and act, else men would not know they were saved, that deliverance has come, that freedom awaits. As P. T. Forsyth says, "The fact without the word is dumb; the word without the fact is empty." Or, Christ without witness is mute; preaching without Christ is empty. Here is our Gospel.

It is unchanging from all time—from the beginning the Word was with God, and was God—but it varies from age to age and generation to generation in its emphasis, according to the need which calls it forth, according to the mind and temper of that age.

This has always been the dismay of students of the history of our faith who have not seen the Gospel behind the gospels. They have seen surface gospels trim their sails before higher criticism, scientific rationalism, proud nationalism, and the corruptions of power. They have seen it run out into purely secular ideals.

But always, nonetheless, the Gospel, God's gracious act in Christ—has stood over the world, not being judged and intimidated by the world, but judging the world. Whenever men have begun with the world, and have sought to have a Christ who conformed, it was a poor, diminished Christ they proclaimed. When men have begun with Christ, and have proclaimed Him, unchanging, to changing needs, they have spoken from strength and been faithful to their evangelistic commission.

What Are the Needs of the Hour?

Then, third, what are the needs of the hour to which we must speak? What is it which holds the people of our time and our time itself from fulfilling the great promise and hope that God has for it? Admit at once that it is easier to diagnose an age than to speak the healing word to it.

Each one here has his own diagnosis of the age, and as a group, remember again that we are imprisoned within a segment of society and culture, and bound to our historical origins, which determine our perspective.

Once in a group of people trying to feel the moods and needs of the people in and out of our Churches, a dozen answers were given. Futility, some said, is the great mark of our time. Anxiety, said others. Loneliness, guilt, doubt. Finally one older, wiser man said the word which held most: "People today feel helpless."

Does this come near your own diagnosis of the ills of our age, to which our Gospel must speak? If the Gospel is always preached as salvation to sinful man, to use our family language, is "helplessness" in any way a contemporary sin or product of sin?

We preach to people who have managed a surface mastery of life as has no other age. In technology we have displayed an unparalleled inventiveness. Within certain limits we are lords of creation. But the limits are there. And just beyond those limits lie uncertainties and lurking powers which have us at their mercy. Because we have so many little things wrapped up so neatly, we seem baffled the more by the big things beyond. Giant forces, massive national powers, immense world problems. A geologic shift in the realm of race and nation before which we have the same feeling of helplessness that we do in an earthquake or hurricane. And death. Always death. Beneath our bravado lurks the feeling of helplessness. It shows in many ways.

Could this sense of helplessness, for example, be one great root of the widespread plea for a comforting faith? Our superficial mastery of surface things keeps us on the jump as we manage, organize, operate and run. But our uneasy helplessness about deeper matters keeps us anxious. We try to hide it, and in the darkness where we hide it, it grows feverish and bitter. So we don't want a disturbing Gospel. We want to be soothed, pacified, comforted, lulled. And within the contemporary American Church, at any rate, this kind of soporific Gospel is being proclaimed endlessly and with great success.

A Crossless Gospel?

The devil lurks in this situation. For many an honest, devout preacher is torn by a dilemma. He can proclaim a crossless gospel, a gospel without pain, and he knows that if he does it will gain immediate acceptance. It lies within tempting reach of any preacher to interlard his sermons with anecdotes of successful living, and to find his congregations increasing. And comfort *is* a legitimate ministry. But he knows also that in the center of the Apostolic Gospel there is a Cross; that when God made Himself known to man, to reach him and save him in his stubborn sinfulness, he had to go to a Cross to do it. He knows that when the Gospel is encountered, it shocks

and offends. When we really meet Christ, it is not always with a cry of joy, but with a cry of pain, for we resent Him when He shows us our real selves, things we hide from ourselves, what He demands of us. We resist. Yet new life begins here.

Further, any preacher knows today that if he adopts the efficient methods which modern psychology and advertising put at his disposal, the methods of administration and promotion, he can have an outwardly successful Church, no matter what its gospel. This surface success, which characterizes our society, this mastery of organization, can come to almost any Church—to yours. Yet again the honest parson knows that this is not the Church born at Pentacost, not the Church for which Christ died, not the Apostolic Church which is Christ's body and lives but to do His will.

The minister and Church of today is in this tension, which is one product of our time and of the needs to which we speak. But the benzydrine gospel does not save. Too many people do not need what they want; nor want what they need.

Are We Too Small?

And now the question again: Are we Congregationalists imprisoned in our freedom-forms, too small of mind and spirit for the whole Gospel, or can we renew our freedom today in Him in Whom alone is true freedom?

And my single point is that we as Congregational Christians have a unique opportunity to speak the full and saving Gospel. We can be faithful.

Certainly, to begin with, we are not hardened into a monolithic Church, which dispenses grace in sacerdotal allotments, but is not itself a creation of grace. We still know the Church to be an organism, not a mechanism. It lives, it changes; it is not rigid and unchanging. It is the prolongation of the Apostolic fellowship of the redeemed into our midst—the prolongation of the Presence of the Redeemer into our midst. He is in the midst of us, creating still His Church. Our freedom serves us well here.

Certainly, further, we do not have a hardened and unbending theology which makes it impossible for us to speak to our time because our thought forms and our vocabulary are of other centuries and other needs. The problem of the Communication of the Gospel is always great, but we have proven able to speak. We were able to speak clearly when a social Gospel was being born in the nineteenth century. We were able to understand and speak to liberalism in its high decades, and we never succumbed to it wholly. Now the rebirth of theology is tempering us, but we have not lost touch with the world. Our freedom has served us well here, too.

Again, though we are made up largely of certain groups, classes, economic levels, educational attainments, political views, and moral habits, yet even here is potential power. Can we in all humility recognize that the groups which make us up are groups who in the power of the Gospel can be key groups, seed groups in society and world? True, we have tended to frame Christ in our frame, but rubbing shoulders with others of the Christian family in the ecumenical movement has been good for us. Our conscience is alive. We know the dangers and the potentials of our parochialism.

Bible Still Open

But above all else, our Bible is still open. We have not trapped its meanings in literalism, nor made it vague in an utter relativism. For us, as for few others, this Book is God's living Word. The work God has done for our redemption in Christ, His life, death, and resurrection, He did inspire to be recorded and interpreted in the Bible. The faith in

which the Apostles wrote was the faith He gave them: it had to be a great faith to hold all Christ meant to them. And if the Church is His body, so the Bible is His Word, prolonged into our very midst and hour. As this Bible records the advent of the Gospel in history, and its rooting there in the Apostles, so it speaks to us in our own history, and to the need we have of rooting it here.

Our Authority

We Congregationalists know that the Bible itself is not infallible; but the Gospel it contains is infallible. The true and final authority of the Bible is its absolute certainty of redemption accomplished, God acting, Christ come. And when we of the Book proclaim the Gospel of the Book—the infallibility of the Bible is testified to, not by our testimony that it is true or beautiful, but in our faith that we are saved, our certainty of forgiveness. It is our response in faith, and the obedience manifested in our changed lives, which reveals our final acknowledgment of the authority of the Bible. And here is our authority as Christ's people in our time.

Fulfillment of Freedom

True, the Bible is only intelligible to those who are saved, who read in faith the Gospel of faith. But gloriously the Gospel has saving and evangelical power when it is preached *in* faith, by those for whom the Book lives. And this is where Congregationalism stands, in a position of incomparable power and promise. It proclaims, not a polity or a creed, but a saving faith in Gospel and Scripture, and its freedom lies in its capacity to follow this faith.

Our evangelistic imperative as Congregational-Christians is to proclaim God's saving love in Christ, and to proclaim it steadily, clearly, joyfully, as people of the open Bible. Here is the fulfillment of our freedom; that we can, if we will, turn to Christ, and have our freedom renewed in our time. To man's hunger for deliverance, we shall then witness to God's passion to save.

The Church in the Twentieth Century

CERTAINLY BY EVERY TEST but that of influence the Church had never been stronger than it was at the opening of the twentieth century, and its strength increased steadily. Everyone was a Christian, and almost everyone joined some church, though few for reasons that would have earned them admission to Jonathan Edwards' Northampton congregation. The typical Protestant of the twentieth century inherited his religion as he did his politics, though rather more casually, and was quite unable to explain the differences between denominations. He found himself a church member by accident and persisted in his affiliation by habit; he greeted each recurring Sunday service with a sense of surprise and was persuaded that he conferred a benefit upon his rector and his community by participating in church services. The church was something to be "supported," like some aged relative whose claim was vague but inescapable.

Never before had the church been materially more powerful or spiritually less effective.

—HENRY STEELE COMMAGER
in *The American Mind*

NOT BECAUSE YOU MAY, BUT BECAUSE YOU MUST PART II

by CHALMERS COE

IF WHAT HAS BEEN SAID[1] about the meaning of the Lord's Supper—that it has to do with Christ in history and Christ in eternity united in Christ here—it remains to describe exactly how the Church normally celebrates the Sacrament, or should, and how the present general practice of Congregationalists might profitably be changed. Finally I should like to add a few comments on the important and difficult question of the qualifications for the reception of communion.

In broad outline the Reformed approach to the celebration of the Eucharist has in recent years been ably sketched by men like Horton Davies, W. D. Maxwell, and Nathaniel Micklem. Briefly stated, corporate worship in the Reformed tradition is twofold: it contains elements both of instruction and of communion. In the first part, the instruction, biblical reading and exposition are to the fore, along with the motifs of praise and confession. In the second part, the prayer of consecration—with its divisions of remembrance, thanksgiving, petition for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and oblation—leads on to the communion itself. And, as these men have pointed out many times, the structure of worship ought to be such that, even on those days when the Sacrament is not observed, the same order is there; when Communion Sunday comes, therefore, the Lord's Supper assumes a kind of inevitable and climactic place. It is not tacked on to an otherwise complete "preaching service."

So far most intelligent Christians—who are abreast of current scholarship in the field of worship—are in agreement. Fortunately we have come to the point where "liturgy" no longer stands for fussy millinery and stoles for the choir and the Dresden amen—although I understand that there are some places where these misconceptions continue and flourish. We are successfully rediscovering the true pattern of Reformed worship. But there remain certain specific questions involving dangerous obscurities and confusions; they are questions where theory and practice ought to meet, but where they are presently in conflict.

1. In a previous article in this journal.

I

And first the sermon. We speak of Word and Sacrament, as if the two were equally expressions of the one Gospel. So they are. And therefore the sermon, if it is placed where it ought to be placed—immediately after the reading of the New Testament lesson—is either consistent in character with the Gospel later to be set forth in Sacrament, or is a flagrant and shocking contradiction. Maybe that is why, with a sense of decency if with no other liturgical virtue, clergy have allowed the sermon to shrink to a scant few minutes of "meditation." At least they have not seen fit to extend their general remarks on the state of the world and the best means of obtaining an early retirement in Florida to the intolerable length of half an hour! But such an accomplishment is really somewhat negative. For the sermon and the Sacrament ideally belong together; there ought to be no elements received without a previous heralding of the Truth which gives them their meaning. And, as Mr. Barr pointed out so ably in a previous issue of the QUARTERLY, the sermon, to be a sermon, must be an exposition of the

Word of God. So perhaps the time has come for ministers either to do an honest Sunday's labor in the pulpit at Communion time or else to extend their increasingly popular "liturgical silence" into the moments when they stand facing the congregation. Anything rather than the brief stories from Doran's manual gleaned from the entries under "Lord's Supper" and "Bread."

Next the elements themselves. In a previous article I suggested, what every Congregational clergyman knows already, that for Reformed Christians the presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament is best understood in terms of His action through and upon the broken bread and the poured wine. The connection between the bread and wine themselves and our own daily life and work is obvious, or ought to be obvious; but surely it is true that, in terms of the actual events of the eucharistic service as we know it and in terms also of any worshipper's state of mind while the service proceeds, no such connection is ever made plain. Come into the church, and there are the elements already arranged on the holy table, with every crease in every linen cloth just so, and with the proper number of plates in each stack and the proper number of stacks on each side of the center. Nothing out of balance; nothing without harmony. And, worst of all, no hint of recognition of the idea that the bread and wine represent ourselves. In this respect we are terribly impoverished, for all our wealth, compared with the men of New Testament times. Then the members of the Church brought the elements with them to the Eucharist, the products of their labor which, once consecrated, were given back to them as the true bread of heaven and food of eternal life, Jesus Christ. Now, thanks in part to a society which is many times more complicated economically, it may be possible for us to associate our gifts of coin and paper with our daily work and therefore with ourselves. It is obviously difficult, though, for us to realize that God is taking the stuff of *our* common life and using it as the instrument of His active presence. And therefore we incline to think of the elements as themselves "holy" or "different"—removed from our sphere—even before the consecration; while the truth is that, until their consecration, they are only holy in the sense in which all common things are holy. Communion bread doesn't need a special recipe or a separate baking tin; chain-store bread will do, for that is the kind of bread that is prevalent in modern society. The only trouble is that we find it hard to imagine ourselves as the bakers. Now surely no piece of ritualistic gadgetry is going to improve the situation overnight, for the problem is a cultural and theological problem as well as a liturgical, but one change in sacramental worship might very well be of help. I mean a revival of the "great entrance" as it can still be seen in the liturgies of the Orthodox Church. If deacons bring up both the offerings and the communion elements at the same time and present them at the table, proceeding immediately with the preparation of the elements, the identification of the two is inevitable. It will also serve another and crucially important purpose: I mean the placing of due emphasis on nature and its role in the Christian life. Opponents of the current theological revival are continually saying that it fails to give enough stress to the doctrine of creation; and yet, in their own communion services they have not taken advantage of this very practical opportunity to redress the balance.

II

Now turn from these preliminary issues to the heart of the Lord's Supper as a verbal structure: the consecration prayer itself. In "A Book of Worship for Free Churches"—which, by the way, calls one of its services "An Order of Morning Worship with Communion," thus perpetuating the idea that the Eucharist is an appendage to non-sacramental wor-

ship—the prayer of consecration is highly instructive. True, it does include most of the constituent parts of the traditional anaphora. And there is a prayer of petition addressed to our need of the coming of the Holy Spirit for the sanctification of this bread and wine. But to what end? The answer is "that they may become unto us symbols of the body that was broken and the blood that was shed for us." Now without question there was a time when Christians understood the rich meaning of the term "symbol" in their tradition. There is a real question, however, whether or not they understand it now; more likely they think of it as a token or "reminder" of something else with which it has only a tangential connection. The Evangelical and Reformed Church has a more adequate phrase: ". . . send thy Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these elements of bread and wine, that the bread which we break may be to us the Communion of the Body of Christ, and the cup of blessing which we bless the Communion of the Blood of Christ." Ambiguous, perhaps, and "receptionist"; but it is biblical and it makes for fewer negative impressions in a worshipper's mind. The English Congregationalists are far better. "So sanctify these elements of bread and wine, and bless thine own ordinance, that we may receive by faith the body and blood of Jesus Christ, crucified for us, and so feed upon him, that he may be one with us, and we with him." (A Book of Public Worship, pp. 51-52).

Then, still in connection with the service in "A Book of Worship for Free Churches," take the puzzling absence of any thanksgiving whatsoever. Eucharist, as nearly everyone is aware, literally means thanksgiving; and to omit all mention of God's mighty acts in creation and redemption, to leave out all reference to the giving of the Holy Spirit, the foundation of the Church, the establishment of the sacraments, and the forgiveness of sins by the atoning cross of our Savior is surely to rob the Christian revelation of nearly everything that gives it uniqueness and power. If the service under discussion is at all an accurate picture of what prevails among us—and chances are it portrays accurately the *best* of our current procedure—some searching questions need to be put. Should we not have longer, fuller consecration prayers, even allowing for the variety of expression and phrasing that ought to be characteristic of Congregationalists? Should they not be less "subjective" than this and have more stress on the objective facts of our redemption (always admitting that "objective" certainly should not imply that the facts of the Christian gospel are matters external and irrelevant to us)? I have heard one reliable person say of a communion service he had attended: "It seemed we were intended to participate in a kind of toast to our departed ancestors." Irreverent? But was it not, perhaps, equally irreverent for a parson to have made the inference possible? After all, even "A Book of Worship for Free Churches" gives this heading to the lines spoken at the communication of the Blood of Jesus Christ: "The cup of remembrance." Well, it *is* a cup of remembrance; but it is a great deal more.

III

No doubt other aspects of the consecration prayer and of the supplementary prayers in the liturgy of the faithful are badly, even desperately, in need of revision. Nevertheless there are certain ministerial actions in the Lord's Supper, as well as some actions by the congregation, that also demand our immediate attention.

One of them is the custom of repeating a sentence of administration after the consecration is over. Generally it is the familiar "Ministering to you in His name, I give to you (or, archaically, "unto you") this bread." Whatever the conscientious clergyman may have done in the way of recasting and re-thinking the consecration, whatever radical changes

he may have made in order to give the church a sense of supernatural action in the Supper, is totally and irrevocably lost the instant he repeats these words. It can never be retrieved that morning. "I give to you this bread." But, assuming it is still bread, isn't it something more? What about Christ's word, however interpreted, "this, my body"? Has the action of the service thus far meant nothing? Is the consecration only a form of words? Are we going through a kind of charade, after which everyone can take his tea and cookie and talk politely to the ladies and gentlemen in the garden? "I give unto you this . . ." This Lord, this Christ, this gift which is a human impossibility and which I hardly dare to say I, as pastor, am offering. And there is also the introductory phrase "Ministering to you in His name." Well, it ought to be plain even to the most dull-witted and sleepy-headed in church Who it is Whom the parson represents; there is no need to call attention to the fact! The manual acts of breaking bread and pouring wine shout it clearly enough; so does his place behind the table—if he has been wise enough, as the writer has not always been—to stand facing the people. It simply is not right to drag the human into prominence at this moment, when men and women are preparing to receive their God. Much better to say, "The bread which we break is the communion of the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ," or, even more starkly, "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was broken for you."

Another issue is the question whether to have the congregation make its communion all at once or take the elements individually. No one, evidently, has ever dealt with this matter at any length. Surely there is something to be said for both, and we need further amplification of the theological, liturgical, and psychological values and demerits of each method. The sense of community achieved in the "together" plan is undeniable, although some have expressed the opinion that it is, if anything, overpowering and forces our attention too nearly exclusively on the church militant on earth and too little on the church triumphant in Heaven. And no doubt we lost a great deal when the common cup was abandoned, which the "together" method partly restores. But there are at least two serious objections, the one practical and the other theological, which, to the writer's mind, make the older system preferable when the congregation receives communion sitting in the pew and using the small glasses. First, it is hardly edifying or conducive to profound Christian piety to have a piece of bread decomposing in your hand for five minutes. Second, the Gospel commands us to eat the Bread of Life, not to hold it more or less indefinitely. If the bread is a mere token of something or other the objection is not serious, and in fact the impression grows that those who hold to a "reduced" view of the Sacramental presence of Jesus are those who are least troubled here. But if you believe that Jesus Christ is really present I think you will feel rather odd conforming to the new custom. And even if it be said that the idea of "holding Jesus Christ in your hand" is idolatrous, the action still has a definite symbolic function; and psychologically its symbolism is, to say the least, singular.

Many more problems, unrecognized though they often are, press urgently upon the thoughtful Christian as he tries to evaluate present trends in eucharistic worship. There is, for instance, the question of grape juice versus wine: the one patently insipid, the other accused by some of being spirituous rather than spiritual. Professor Dillenberger of Harvard has suggested facetiously that it might be for the Christian good of everyone if those who moralistically insist on grape juice were forced to use real wine, while those who with fine snobbery insist on wine were compelled to use grape juice. Others argue that more Protestants use the product in its unfermented form

than use it in its fermented, and therefore recommend the former over the latter on the grounds of naturalness. But the assumption is open to debate. And, frankly, there is something to be said for the life and strength of wine as over against the flatness of the other. But here we are verging on the trivial. You can, if you try, make out a case of those who, as faithful communicants of the Church of South India, use orange juice.

IV

What is far more significant is the matter of the communion invitation. Who is welcome to it?

The simplest answer has customarily been: "all who love our Lord Jesus Christ." In a period when the love of Jesus Christ and membership of Christ's Church were taken by most people to involve each other, that invitation was perfectly adequate. It is not now. Too many ignorant if sincere persons profess to love our Lord Jesus Christ but, at the same time, would not understand what the New Testament really means by that expression and who might never dream of uniting with the Church. And, when all is said and done, the Lord's Supper is meant for Christians (unless we propose to be openly superstitious), Christians are churchmen (unless we defy what the phrase "in Christ" stands for in the epistles), and churchmen are individuals who have both received Baptism and made public confession of their faith. It seems, then, that we should have some new version of the traditional invitation if a congregation is fairly to represent itself and its position to society. Such an expression as "We welcome to the Lord's table all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ and are members of His Church" might do, it being understood that evangelical Christians from other traditions and other parishes are included in the invitation. At all events the issue deserves the closest and most careful consideration, not least because of the confusion in which some children find themselves when Communion Sunday arrives and they have neither been received into membership in full communion nor been told why they should wait until that time before receiving the sacrament. And of course they should wait.

The Eucharist, to conclude, is the central act of Christian praise. In it God takes the works of His hands and ours, imperfect though our hands have left them and marked with our own sin, and makes them the instruments of the presence of His Son. Here he acts. Throughout the liturgy He is speaking to us the word of pardon and the promise of a splendid and incomparable new life. Then, as a climax, He gives us Jesus Himself. It is peculiarly appropriate that, when the Sacrament is over, we should rejoice in words composed for the use of Christians of our faith and order in England: "We give thee praise and thanks that upon us the unworthy thou dost confer so rich a benefit as to bring us into the communion of thy Son Jesus Christ; whom having delivered up to death, thou hast given for our nourishment unto everlasting life."

The Sacrament

THE SACRAMENT IS APPOINTED that we may get a better grip of Christ nor we gat in the simple word. The Sacraments are appointed that I may have Him mair fullie in my saull, that I might have the bounds of it enlarged; that He may make the better residence in me.

—ROBERT BRUCE
First Sermon

THE MINISTER AND THE PARISH

LEONARD J. EBEL, Associate Minister of Christ Church (Congregational) Silver Spring, Maryland, in his article, *"The Associate in Christian Education,"* brings to our attention a matter of increasing concern to a number of us who are in the pastoral ministry. The rapid growth of our churches in a period of national prosperity has heightened the necessity of developing a staff ministry in quite a large number of churches. Any minister whose church has been compelled to seek a second minister for the church staff knows what a critical problem this is. Leonard Ebel in this article rich with wit and wisdom gives us a valuable insight as to why and how this situation has developed, and suggests a new philosophy of the ministry which can alleviate the present problem.

DONALD WALKER MORGAN, a graduate of Tufts College and Union Theological Seminary, has served as Minister of the Federated Church in Northfield, Vermont since the summer of 1953. He is unusually well qualified for serving this Church, a federation of Universalist and Congregational Fellowships, since he entered the Seminary as a Universalist minister, and was ordained to the Congregational ministry following his graduation. In the midst of many major efforts toward the union of denominations, and in the present climate of the ecumenical movement, it is good to take a look at what this involves on the level of the local parish. As Dr. Henry Pitt Van Dusen has said recently, the next decade of the ecumenical movement must be on the framework of the local parish situation. Donald Walker Morgan's account of a pastor's experience in this area in his article *"Serving a Federated Church,"* is particularly relevant at this time.

Editor: CHARLES LEONARD COPENHAVER
Glen Ridge Congregational Church
Glen Ridge, New Jersey

THE ASSOCIATE IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

by LEONARD J. EBEL

NOT VERY LONG AGO, a high official in the Washington area, representing the hierarchy of another denomination, which I shall not name, told an associate minister in Silver Spring that there was no church in the Washington area which could or should support two full-time ministers. His is a denomination with many large churches.

In my four years in Silver Spring I have seen nine associates or assistants, responsible for the religious education of youth, come and go. At this writing others are ready to pack. And so this high official is vindicated, because in fact it has worked out that if churches can support two full-time ministers, it would seem they cannot support the second one for very long. One minister who has had three associates in this period was boasting a few weeks ago that the new associate about to arrive "was going to do them a lot of good." I'm still not sure what kept me from adding "if he stays long enough."

From a minister whom I would now conservatively estimate as being fifty years ahead of the times, I received the inspiration, if it was an inspiration, to become an associate minister; one who would be responsible for the religious education of young people, along with other pastoral duties. This was my intention when I entered divinity school. It was something of a shock to find that out of a class of 106, the largest in the history of the school up to that date, I was one of two male students majoring in religious education, and the only one I knew of in the entire school who was intentionally aiming at a ministry as an associate.

As time for graduation came close and I began to look for a position, the only one who encouraged me in chasing after this myth was my faculty advisor, Paul Vieth, who has given his own life to Christian Education, and who we might assume has a vested interest in this myth. All the rest of my professors, classmates, ministerial friends and family could see only the one-man church ministry and seemed soundly convinced that either I was putting off the inevitable ministry in a small parish, or that I was taking a circuitous route to the pulpit of a large church. The only vision of the pastoral ministry which seemed valid to them was that of the dynamic, charismatic preacher, around whom sun and moon and all of the organizations of the local church and local community revolve like so many satellites. Without exception, all of my friends who were heading for the pastoral ministry, were aiming at the realization of this dream. And I was almost convinced that this passage I had read among the epistles of Paul, "That his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers" was New Testament mythology, and that in due time some theologian like Bultmann would undertake to demythologize it and I could take with an easy conscience a small country church in New England.

As things turned out, many of my classmates became associates. I am sure it was a bitter blow to most of them. Without training in religious education, without any genuine taste for what they were doing, they assumed a title until a real opportunity should open up. As to the kind of call they received, I have a

fair idea from a mass interview conducted by a highly respected old Yale graduate who was making such a position available. The job analysis went something like this—no preaching for the associate because the congregation had gotten used to him. There was a good sized youth group to chaperone Sunday morning and evening and a few miscellaneous clerical and janitorial assignments. And then in fine print was the agreement that after two years, the associate would quietly fold up his portfolio and disappear in the direction of a small one man church.

THUS, BEFORE I graduated from school, I had the distinct impression, an impression which has not yet left me, that for the most part, there is a gross and pathetic ignorance among ministers, laity and churches of all denominations as to the possibilities of what can be accomplished in a medium or large sized church through a bona fide associate ministry—as separate and distinct from an internship or waiting period. And we have yet to experience the harmful effects and the full impact of our loss of opportunity that will be evident when one day the myth of the associate minister will be translated so all can understand.

From reliable sources have come words which we all know to be true—that late adolescence is a critical time in the religious life of most individuals. For many it is a time of rebellion against authority, and rising doubts about many hitherto unquestioned precepts. It is the age when church loyalty is strained the hardest, as is proven by the sharp dropping off of attendance figures for this age group across the country. There are few who do not recognize that this is the hole in our dike which needs immediate and strong constructive effort. Yet, because this age is so demanding in so many ways, there has been a well-nigh universal trend for ministers of large and medium sized churches to shake loose of any responsibility in this area save for nominal concern. This is understandable, with ministers trying to cover everything else from the apostolate to psychiatry. But, what is not understandable is that they should feel that this area of religious education for youth is unimportant. And this a minister certainly indicates, even if unintentionally, when he turns over the religious education of those at this critical age to so-called associates, who have no more training in Religious Education than they themselves have had; to associates who always have one eye peeled for a good opening in a church where they will be the general, and who, as Hal Luccock once put it, are always warming up the bullpen while the senior minister preaches. And so the second string preachers come and go, often visiting a weird assortment of programs and doctrine on a bewildered lot of teen-agers who should have every right to think of the ministry as a highly unstable calling and who could rightly infer that for all the noise of concern of adults, they are not really considered very important. How much lost effort, lost momentum is there in this wasteful process? What a disservice to young people who need solid, mature guidance for their quickened minds, who are most receptive at this time to guidance in the important areas of vocation and Christian marriage, and from whom, ironically, we expect to get the next generation of ministers.

IN CONNECTION with Church Vocations Sunday, Fred Buschmeyer in a letter to ministers, deplored our lack of leadership for the ministry, our borrowing from other denominations. Can this situation ever improve? Will it not always be a diminishing return as long as we make the least effort at the point where young people decide what to do with their lives?

Having taught now in a goodly number of training courses for youth workers, I have been painfully aware of the gross inadequacies of what we call our ministry to youth. Working in the community with associates and assistants re-

sponsible for youth, I am aware of how confused they are about their status and their calling; how little grasp they have on the local church and community situation. When one does not know from month to month who will be on the roster, can there ever be any effective long range planning for the religious needs of youth at the community level?

ENOUGH HAS BEEN said about the problem, and so I would not add my suggestions of what might be done to improve the situation. My first suggestion is that we start to demythologize at the other end of the ministry—pointing out to those entering seminary, or to some ministers already in the field that the one-man pastoral ministry is not the ultimate for every man. And with this, we should give them an incentive for enquiring into this other kind of a ministry by giving genuine status and standing to associates both in the local congregation and in ministerial organizations—by writing a job analysis which will be worthy and challenging to the best that is in them—by leaving out the small print concerning departure after two years. The associate should be one who has already served an apprenticeship, one who is mature, stable, and ready to build a real program of education for youth.

After four years in the associate ministry at Silver Spring, I feel that I have found in this calling all that I have looked for and dreamed about; responsive youth, adequate plant, adequate salary, a progressive congregation, a wonderful team spirit on a staff of six full-time servants of God. And my time is so taken up with the challenge and joy of my work that I could probably manage not to think too hard about what is happening in the broader picture, except that after four years, I am now the gray-haired dean of associates in Silver Spring and once in a while a wave of nostalgia passes over me as I think of all who have come and just faded away.

TO CONCLUDE, I would offer you the parable of a Silver Spring gardener, a friend of mine who read about lawn plugs, those little patches of grass that you place around in various spots in a lawn to revive it. He bought some and then carefully planted and watered each plug. But the sun beat upon these plugs and the weeds hedged them around about, and one morning he arose, and lo, he could not find where he had planted them. But a neighbor who was a smarter gardener, planted two or three plugs together. And the sun beat upon them and the weeds raged round about. But when the hot season was over, he arose and lo, his lawn flourished mightily. And so it shall be, that wherever two or three are gathered together, they may do out of all proportion to what one can do.

The next issue of THE MINISTER'S QUARTERLY *will appear in December.*

Four demands on its ministry

SERVING THE FEDERATED CHURCH

by DONALD WALKER MORGAN

"WHY CAN'T THE churches get together?" Some such question is voiced by ministers and laymen alike. Of course, the churches *are* getting together. Maybe the process of reunion takes more time than we like, but evidence of this gratifying trend can be seen in the union of entire denominations and also in local federations. We Congregational-Christians, ourselves the product of a happy union, now move hopefully toward the formation of the United Church of Christ. Thus we intend to give faithful witness to the essential oneness of the Body of Christ. But it is with the federated church that this article deals. Those who have served such churches will probably agree that the federated church would often seem to constitute a "peculiar breed." It sometimes presents unusual problems and would appear to require a correspondingly different type of ministry. Generalizations are easily deceptive, if not untrue. Nonetheless, insofar as federated churches possess certain peculiar problems, we may proceed to discuss these churches and the type of ministry they may require.

Look, first of all, at the areas of difficulty sometimes, though not always, found within the federated church. One is that of organizational multiplicity. Many federated churches have three or more sets of officers and boards, rather than one. They have officers and boards for the federated church itself, along with those still functioning of the covenanting churches. Endless overlapping, awkwardness of operation, and a fair measure of inefficiency may waste the church's vitality. Again, multiplicity of organization may mean that good potential leadership is inadequately utilized. Few churches can boast of an inexhaustible supply of able men and women, potential leaders capable of doing a first-rate job on various vital boards. In federated churches, where organization has not been streamlined, the sphere and influence of such people are sometimes limited. Consequently, important positions must be filled by many who are frankly less qualified. Still another result of this multiplicity of organization is that members are baffled to understand the mysterious and involved workings of the church. So they grow apathetic, and with apathy there comes avoidance of responsibility in these areas of the church's life. Needless to say, the minister himself sometimes finds the situation a trifle trying. He may grow impatient with the clumsy and complex operation of his church.

Ironically, the federated church, originally intended to express the unity of Christ's universal Fellowship, often displays an alarming degree of isolationism and provincialism. We should expect its members would grow in their awareness of the "one great fellowship of love throughout the whole wide earth." Actually they may become less so! This strange condition is brought about because their denominational ties, perhaps their only real ties to the universal Church, are easily blurred and ignored. Several things contribute to this development. Some of the members may feel themselves above the supposedly narrow emphases of the denominations involved. Thus they may fall into a sad state of increasing isolation.

Again, the minister may become timid about referring to one denomination or the other for fear of such references being mistakenly regarded as evidence of

his partiality. Some of his members, though fortunately not all or even many, may be quick to notice any unintended favoritism toward "the other side." Then, too, there is twice the ground to cover in seeking to maintain an informed membership concerning the agencies and work of the denominations. Once more, many new members, even if they officially identify themselves with one covenanting church or the other, may actually feel that they have joined simply the local united church. That enables them, so they think, to excuse themselves from interest in the concerns of Christ's Church beyond their own community. So it is that the federated church may conduce to an atomistic view of Christian fellowship, and, where such is the case, the cause of union is neither happily nor helpfully being served.

ANOTHER PROBLEM which may trouble a federated church is the need for an equitable arrangement for contributing financially to the denominations. How shall the total amount alloted for benevolences be divided? One denomination suggests a fifty-fifty division, but the membership within the local federation may not be similarly split. Ought "one side" give for the missionary projects of the other at the expense of its own? That would seem unfair. In this area, indeed, jealous concern for the interests of his own denomination may be evinced by a single church-member. What often happens is that the federated church participates less and less in the world-wide work of Christians. Thus, it becomes financially self-centered and ingrown, and "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Naturally, the *esprit de corps* of the federated church may suffer seriously. There may be a singular lack of unity and inner cohesion within the ranks. One federated church used to be described by some individuals in its town as "the disunited United Church"! With such divisive tendencies at work, is it any wonder that a deep and lifting sense of spiritual unity is sometimes absent in federated churches?

Certainly it goes without saying that not every federation need sail through such turbulent waters. Many examples could be cited of unions which, in all respects, have been wholly successful and satisfying. Many other examples could be cited where the inevitable "growing pains" are now a matter of fading memory. The writer has himself been repeatedly gratified by the ever increasing good will and mutual affection manifested by the people of his church. Certainly, too, redemption is always possible, even for cluttered, tangled federated churches. Many steps can be taken to ameliorate a bad situation.

FOR ONE THING, wherever possible, unnecessary officers and boards can gradually be eliminated. A careful pruning of the tree, particularly within the covenanting churches, will prove immeasurably helpful. Also, the organization of what might be called the "center," the federated church itself, can be strengthened and enlarged. One church was without a Board of Deacons for the first twenty-seven years of the union! There were, of course, deacons on the two "sides," but joint-meetings were difficult and a unified spiritual program for the federated church all but impossible. The answer there was simply the creation of a single Board of Deacons and the subsequent establishment of various vital committees whose functions previously had been handled by groups scattered everywhere with little or no central direction.

A most carefully planned program of missionary education for the entire church is imperative. That means that the minister cannot do otherwise than to dramatize the work of both denominations. Every possible occasion—the church calendar, meetings, and parish dinners—should be exploited for educating the

members concerning the larger work of Christ's Church. Frequent stress should also be given to the fact of the universal Fellowship of Christians. A fearless grappling with the problem of indifference to our world-wide responsibility can go far toward its solution.

CONCERNING THE MATTER of benevolences, one church worked out a simple and convenient formula for dividing the benevolence-budget. It was decided that the division should coincide exactly with the proportion of giving to the total budget from the two "sides," from both individuals and funds. If, let us say, 55% of the total budget comes from Congregational sources (individuals and funds) and 45% from, say, Methodist sources, then 55% of the benevolence budget will be directed to Congregational work and 45% to Methodist. This formula was incorporated into the covenant of that federated church, and once and for all a previously difficult issue was settled.

In the final analysis, nothing counts for more in the success of a federated church than the kind of leadership provided by the minister. It seems to this writer that four things characterize an effective ministry to a federated church. Doubtless others would argue for other traits, but these seem to the writer to be essential:

First, the minister of a federated church must have a clear and definite theological orientation. His people require a common faith to bind them together. Coming perhaps from amazingly diverse backgrounds, possessing possibly quite different heritages, they are helpfully led to a common ground of Christian belief. Nothing doctrinally narrow or brittle will do, but surely muddled theological thinking cannot be expected to lead to anything like unity of outlook and spirit among his people.

Second, the minister of a federated church must be patient, tactful, and diplomatic. To be sure, these traits are helpful anywhere, but they are indispensable when we serve a federated church. The minister needs to possess what we sometimes call "a pastor's heart," expressed in understanding, patience, and tactfulness.

Third, the minister of a federated church needs to be outspoken in his firm belief in the universal Church. Aware of the danger of an atomistic conception of Christian fellowship, he must emphasize the reality of "the holy catholic Church" under its universal Lord.

FOURTH, THE MINISTER of the federated church must exert strong leadership. That does not mean being dictatorial, but it does mean that he cannot afford the luxury of viewing his concerns as confined strictly to preaching, teaching, calling, and counseling. In all phases of the church, he must lead his people. In all likelihood, he will be the only visible symbol and source, apart from Christ, of whatever unity may be felt in the actual operation of the church. Therefore, he must act decisively, even sometimes boldly, if his church is to enjoy the sense of unity without which survival may be doubtful and growth impossible.

A LITANY FOR THE REDEDICATION OF A CHURCH

by WALTER G. COUCH, JR.

Pastor: Forasmuch as God has moved us through sensitivity to beauty, desire for orderliness, and devotion to the Church of Christ to transform the sanctuary handed down to us by our fathers—enhancing its beauty, dignifying its design, and increasing its usefulness for the enrichment of our spiritual lives —let us now proceed to set it apart again to its proper and sacred uses.

Let us pray:

Pastor: O Thou Eternal God, by Whose providence we are blessed with the Church of Christ, in grateful remembrance of the loyalty and sacrifice of those who have gone before us and bequeathed to us this house of prayer which they erected to meet the spiritual needs of their times; in deep appreciation for all whose vision of mind, skill of hand, and generosity of gift have combined to bring to pass the transformation which our eyes behold; in abiding gratitude for the loving and forgiving fellowship which we enjoy in this church, binding us affectionately together despite differences of opinion, and uniting us strongly in the name of Christ to love our neighbors as ourselves; and in joyous thanksgiving for the blessed and immortal hope of a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, to which Thou wilt welcome us in due season,—

People: We re-dedicate this sanctuary.

Pastor: For worship of Thee in spirit and in truth, in sacrament and word and music,—

People: We re-dedicate this sanctuary.

Pastor: For consolation for the bereaved, guidance for the perplexed, forgiveness for the guilty, strength for the tempted,—

People: We re-dedicate this sanctuary.

Pastor: For the nurture and guidance of children; the challenge and enlistment of youth in fellowship, service, and career; for the hallowing of marriage and family life,—

People: We re-dedicate this sanctuary.

Pastor: For ennobling all honest and useful work, for quickening civic righteousness, for promoting freedom, justice, and peace in all the earth,—

People: We re-dedicate this sanctuary.

Pastor: For the practice of prayer through which, in common worship together and in solitude and silence, we gain the strength and the vision to grow in ever-deepening faith, hope, and love,—

People: We re-dedicate this sanctuary.

Pastor: And now, O God, we offer ourselves anew to the worship and work of this Church, pledging ourselves to love Thee with heart, and mind and soul, and strength, in the name and spirit of Jesus, and in the words of our Church Covenant:

People: We solemnly covenant to study the peace, purity and well-being of this Church; to attend its services; to support its worship and ordinances; to love its members as our brothers and sisters in Christ; and to honor our Lord as we may be able by an upright life. Amen.

THE MINISTER AND WORSHIP

THIS NEW DEPARTMENT OF THE QUARTERLY is introduced with the hope that it may be of interest and service to the ministers of our Fellowship. Especially we are hoping it will appeal to those who are thinking seriously about the nature of Christian Worship as expressed by the Reformed Tradition, and those who are willing to share their insights and better liturgical efforts. Such a sharing can make our services of public worship more articulate and expressive of the spiritual values and aspirations of our time as well as of the ages. Only when our ideas and attitudes become clarified and rooted in a spiritual tradition that is native to us will our efforts to express this tradition through public worship acquire maturity and that timeless character which will allow it to speak with spiritual power and with significance.

This department of THE QUARTERLY contains three short articles: the first deals with "Music for the Wedding"; the second, with a parish minister's effort to express the meaning of "the Rededication" of his remodelled church; and the third, with "The Use of the Covenant in Congregationalism."

MARGARET WESTLAKE POWERS, organist and choir director at Second Congregational Church, Waterbury, Connecticut, is a graduate of Chicago Musical College, and holds the degrees of Master of Sacred Music from the School of Sacred Music, Union Theological Seminary, and Bachelor of Science in Music Education from Teacher's College, Columbia University. In her article, "Music for the Wedding," she shares insights drawn from her observation of, and participation in, a multitude of marriage services in our Congregational churches.

The Reverend WALTER G. COUCH, Jr., D.D., is Minister of the Congregational Church, Florence, Massachusetts. His liturgical effort grew out of a practical need—to lead his own congregation in rededicating their remodelled church.

The editor of this department in presenting, "The Use of the Covenant in Congregationalism" hopes to remind our readers of the "rock whence we are hewn" liturgically; but a rock that is all too often neglected, and which sometimes is so overgrown by the briers and brambles of the fleeting moment that many Congregationalists are not even aware of its existence.

Readers are invited to send in copies of their local church covenant to be printed in THE QUARTERLY. Such a sharing can make a real contribution to our church life, reminding all of us of our abundant heritage, and possibly encouraging some of our churches to take more advantage of the rich possibilities that are native to and rooted in our tradition.

Please send only covenants that are suitable for frequent congregational use, i.e. relatively short, phrased in poetic idiom, and characterized by a timeless theological and literary merit.

Editor: ARTHUR PRESTON COLBURN
Pawtucket Congregational Church
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

MUSIC FOR THE WEDDING

by MARGARET WESTLAKE POWERS

A WEDDING IS A RELIGIOUS rite and as such provides no opportunity for the secular, nor should allowance be made for indulgence in personal whims regarding procedure or music. While it may be hard, because of long years of poor usage, to persuade couples to relinquish "Because" etc., by properly interpreting the spiritual significance of the ceremony, the wedding will become more vital and meaningful to the couple.

There is no reason for music to be played or sung during the ceremony. To have the Lord's Prayer sung deprives the wedding party and the congregation of its only opportunity for corporate worship. To insert a solo after the giving away of the bride, or when the party moves toward the altar, directs attention away from the bridal party and the ceremony, produces unnecessary waiting, and often causes nervousness.

There are many hymns and solos that are eminently suitable for the wedding service. The procession itself creates a problem because many brides feel that a wedding is not a wedding without Wagner's "Here Comes the Bride." However, that is a secular composition, as is the Mendelssohn recessional. Queen Elizabeth II was mindful of this when she chose the stately hymn, "Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven," for her wedding processional. Other appropriate hymns for the processional are, "Love Divine, All Love Excelling"; "Praise to the Lord, the Almighty"; and "Rejoice, the Lord is King" by Horatio Parker (tune: *Jubilate*) which is a bright and joyful marching tune. If not sung as a solo, "O Perfect Love," by Barnby, might well be played as the processional. We suggest that a trumpet fanfare precede the march as a sort of bridge between the instrumental music of the prelude and the ceremony.

Perhaps a descriptive list of vocal solos for the wedding might be helpful. "O Perfect Love" by Joseph Barnby (published by Ditson Co.) is in a solo arrangement using the hymn tune, adding a short vocal introduction and interlude, changing the vocal line on verse three for climax, and adding two Amens at the end. "O Love Divine and Golden" by John Dykes, to the hymn tune *Blairgowrie* (Presbyterian Hymnal) has a beautiful text and vocal line. "A Wedding Benediction" by Austin Lovelace and "A Wedding Prayer" by Fern Glasgow are both easy and tuneful solos any singer will enjoy singing (both published by G. Schirmer). "Behold, What Manner of Love" and "The Ninety-first Psalm" by James G. MacDermid are both beautiful sacred solos within the range of any singer. "The Call" by Ralph Vaughn Williams is more difficult but effective. "A Wedding Suite" by Joseph Clokey contains music for the entire service, including a solo. This is music for those who prefer the more modern type of composition; it is moderately difficult.

Organ music for the processional and recessional should be stately, bright, and simple enough in structure so that the measured beat for walking may be easily followed. There are several Trumpet Tunes by Purcell that are exactly right: *Trumpet Voluntary* (Historical Recital Series No. 39, arranged by Dickinson);

(*Continued on page 38*)

THE USE OF THE COVENANT IN CONGREGATIONALISM

by ARTHUR PRESTON COLBOURN

ALTHOUGH THERE has always been a wide diversity within Congregationalism, there have also been certain persistent and comparatively stable veins in its organizational structure and its spiritual and theological ethos. One such vein has been the Covenant Principle.

This principle is not unique to Congregationalism—since it is claimed and used by a number of religious and political groups, and is much in evidence in the Old Testament. However, it has played a dominant and central role in our tradition, and has much to commend its wider use and appreciation among our churches at the present time.

The early Congregationalists used the covenant concept in at least four different ways: first, the Covenant of Works, symbolized by God's covenant with Adam as the federal head of the race; second, the Covenant of Grace, symbolized by God's covenant with Christ, the second Adam, and on behalf of the faithful; third, the local church covenant, a practical expression of the covenant of works and sealed by the covenant of grace; and fourth, the covenant as applied to civil compacts, exemplified by The Mayflower Compact.

The purpose of this article is to consider the third of the above mentioned uses of the covenant principle: the local church covenant.

THE NATURE AND USE OF THE LOCAL CHURCH COVENANT

1. In early New England a **local church was constituted by "the seven pillars" owning the covenant of the new church; then by others giving assent to the covenant.** The following description is from the records of the first church in New Haven, Connecticut:

> "It was on the 14th of June, 1639, when 'the seven pillars' were hewn out. By covenant among themselves, and by receiving others into the same compact, it was held that a church was constituted on the 22d of August."

The gathering of the historic First Church in Salem, Massachusetts, was of a similar nature:

> "Mr. Higginson and Mr. Skelton and other good people that arrived at Salem in the year 1629 . . . . having the concurrence and countenance of their Deputy Governor, the worshipful John Endicott, Esq., and the approving presence of Governor Bradford and other messengers from Plymouth, they made their confession of faith and entered into a holy covenant whereby this church was formed."
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> ("Three Hundredth Anniversary of the First Church In Salem, Massachusetts," privately printed, 1930; page 118)

John Cotton, some years later, was merely expressing the prevalent view in New England when he wrote: "(The church is composed of) saints united together into one congregation by an holy covenant."

2. The local congregation was **free to adopt any type of covenant, provided it was ancillary to the covenant of the grace of God.** It was not enough for a group to be gathered and to have a covenant. The covenant had to be a "holy" covenant; one owned in the presence of, and in loyalty to, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. A church of the Congregational Way had to be a covenanted gathering, but one "hid with Christ in God." It had to be "in Christ," if it were to become "a little knot of eternal life."

3. The early churches had **a covenantal basis of membership.** New members united with the church by "owning," or giving assent to, the covenant of the local church. The main stress was placed on the purpose of the relationship, not primarily on the intellectual aspect of the faith professed. Most early covenants were remarkably free from dogmatic, doctrinal expression.

The local church could have a creed, or not have a creed; it could even require, as some churches did, assent to a creed as a prerequisite for membership. The main stream of Congregationalism has never been against creeds, and many of our churches have readily and joyously adopted them. The messengers assembled at the Synod of Cambridge in 1648 declared their hearty agreement with the Westminster Statement of Faith and the Savoy Declaration. Congregationalists have traditionally agreed in substance with the main creeds and the central message of Scripture; they have implied that a church with no standard of Faith and Practice could hardly be a part of the Church of Christ.

However, during the last century, any creed adopted has usually been considered as "a testimony of faith" or "for substance of faith"; and not as a "test of faith" or a necessary condition for church membership.

4. The covenant was **"with the Lord and with one another."** This requirement was central, and it was usually expressed openly as a constant reminder to the faithful—some covenants had the reminder implied rather than openly stated. Thus, the local Congregational church was a covenanted fellowship "binding its members to God and to one another through Christ, the Head of the Church."

5. **The statement of purpose** in the older covenants, and in the best ones throughout our history, **took the dual form: duties toward God and duties toward man.** This dual form seemed natural and unselfconscious. The believer promised simply to walk in fidelity to the Divine Commandments and in Christian faithfulness one to another.

6. **An individual remained a member** of a Congregational church **by continuing in a good covenant relationship.** This was the standard of Christian duty and what was expected of those who traveled the path of "holy walking."

METHODS OF "OWNING" THE COVENANT

Most of the early covenants were "mutual covenants," prepared to be used at the organization of a church, and ordinarily owned by giving verbal assent.

Through the years at least four methods were developed by which people gave consent:

1. All repeated the covenant together (Minister, members, and new members).
2. Minister read the covenant vows, and the new members answered.
3. Minister or deacons read the various sections of the covenant and explained them; and then the new members gave answer.
4. Written assent required, with or without some form of verbal assent.

Thus, covenants have been owned by various forms of expressed words, by writing and sealing, and at times even by silent consent.

THE LITERARY FORM OF THE COVENANT

In early Congregationalism the essential factor in a covenant was the agreement, and not its verbal expression or literary style. There was no special sanctity ascribed to the words adopted at the beginning. The words were often changed — usually when a new minister thought he could improve them, or the way they were stated.

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, and the nineteenth, the tendency to alter local church covenants increased, but for a different reason—it was to insert statements opposing some prevalent manifestation of moral evil (slavery, gambling, drinking of alcoholic beverages, etc.) or to counteract theological deviation (especially during the height of the Unitarian Controversy). Many of the covenants written during this period were long, verbose, and filled with elaborate theological terminology. Gradually most of these fell into disuse, because of the modification of theological belief, because of change in social habits and customs, or because of a victory over the particular evil (e.g. slavery, following the Civil War.) Many churches, rather than risk an open breach in their fellowship during periods of theological ferment, chose (consciously or unconsciously) to let the public ceremony of owning the covenant fall into disuse. Eventually many of these churches even forgot that they had ever had a covenant.

The best of the early covenants were brief, simple, and written in the Biblical idiom. Because of their style and idiom, they possessed a timelessness that made them appropriate for all ages and able to withstand the various changes in the climate of opinion. A number of them were classical expressions of English prose; and wise and blessed were the churches that retained them. The First Church in Salem, Massachusetts, still uses the covenant that was "owned" when the church was gathered in 1629. It is one of the best known, most beautiful, and most beloved covenants in Congregationalism:

> "We covenant with the Lord and one with another; and doe bynd ourselves in the presence of God, to walk together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himself unto us in his Blessed word of truth."

The church gathered at Scrooby, England, in 1606, which has such a special place in the hearts of all Congregationalists, has had its covenant handed down in several different forms. The one recorded by William Bradford, governor of the Plymouth Colony, is perhaps the most familiar and cherished:

> "As ye Lord's free people, we joyne ourselves, by a covenant of the Lord, in ye fellowship of ye gospell, to walke in all his ways, made known, or to be made known unto us, according to our best endeavours, whatsoever it shall cost us, the Lord assisting us."

THE RICH LITURGICAL POSSIBILITIES OF THE COVENANT

Here I would offer a plea for the recovery of the creative use of the covenant among our churches: reclaiming its significant position in the thought and polity of our tradition, and re-thinking its liturgical possibilities. Our Congregational forefathers used the covenant frequently. They recited it "solemnly and in unison" as a symbol and sign of their unity of purpose.

The liturgical possibilities for using a "mutual covenant" are thrilling to consider and can provide one of the enriching and creative contributions of the Congregational Way to the Ecumenical Movement. Naturally the covenant can and should be owned when new members unite with the local church. It is also appropriate for other deeply meaningful and spiritually significant occasions—church anniversaries, dedications and re-dedications, and times of special penitence, praise or thanksgiving. And why not own it periodically, or customarily, at the end of the Communion Service—a fitting means of renewing our vows after we have participated in the central act of Christian worship.

In March, 1949, the First Congregational Church of Woodstock, Vermont, adopted a new covenant in an effort to reclaim its heritage and to bless and enrich its on-going life. The covenant, written by a local committee, is as follows:

> "We covenant with the Lord and with one another, and do bind ourselves in the presence of God to walk together in His holy ways.
>
> "We will strive to be doers of the Word and not hearers only, to be firm in faith, quickened in hope, and constant in charity.
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> "And we will consecrate our time, talent, substance and influence as heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Amen."

The Congregational Church at West Warwick, Rhode Island, has a local committee working on a new covenant at the present time. The committee was requested by the church to keep in mind the probably wider liturgical use of the new covenant, therefore its members were to consider not only what they wanted said but also how it should be said.

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Trumpet Tune and Peal, arranged by Harvey Grace (omit the Peal); "Now Thank We All Our God" by Karg-Elert would make a good recessional if played at an appropriate tempo.

Organ music for the Prelude affords a much wider range for selection. The mood should be bright, happy, and tuneful. A few suggestions might be: *Fantasie in A,* by Cesar Franck; *Idyll,* Baumgartner; Chorale: *I Stand on the Threshold,* Bach; *Dreams,* McAmis; *Romance Sans Paroles,* Joseph Bonnet; *Benediction,* Karg-Elert; *Aria* from Concerto X, Handel; *Air* from "The Water Music," Handel; and occasionally the "Meditation" from *Thais* by Massenet. While this is not sacred music, the opera is never given, and most people don't associate the melody with any secular connotation. Most of the compositions listed may also be played for the weekly worship service.

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Congregationalism

vagueness that raises a question of how profoundly we understand this heritage which we all agree is unique.

I think we are vague because we have lost or forsaken the one institution which alone gives depth and meaning to the Congregational Way. That is, the Church Meeting. We are reputed to have the most loose and undefined church life of all, and yet Congregationalism is historically one of the most concrete and specific. The regular monthly—sometimes weekly—gathering of Church members in Congregational Meeting to share their deepest concerns for their Church's life, both material and spiritual, and to pray about them, was intended to be the very heart and life-blood of the Congregational Way.

This is where we are to be obedient to our Lord Christ. This is what our freedom is for! Not that we should be free to be obedient simply as individuals, but corporately, as a congregation. When Congregational Churches live this way, there is no room for Robert's Rules and majority votes. Instead, by this discipline of humble open-ness, Christ is more able to make His will known, and the people's decision comes unanimously—because they have been moved by the Spirit. After this kind of meeting perhaps Congregational people could again say honestly, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us . . . ."

The sorrow of our divisions and bitterness convinces me that Congregationalism must recover its Church Meeting before it is too late. It is more than just a good thing. There is power in the discipline of the Meeting to make us people of the Spirit, and to make our churches mighty in the Kingdom-Cause. This is the witness our Christ has given us to make. If we fail to make it, we fail not only our brothers in the faith, but we fail the Master Himself.

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Baptism

as one enters into the Body of Christ as a member where the Risen Christ is eternally contemporary head." In what sense can an infant four to six weeks of age die to the old and rise to the new? In what sense or to what extent can an infant at that age become a member of the Community of which "the Risen Christ is eternally contemporary head?"

It is one thing for a gathered congregation to hear the vows of an individual who has himself become a Believer and therefore wishes to enter into membership in the Community that nurtured his faith. Such an experience will undoubtedly do much to recall to each worshipper his or her own baptismal vows and also cause the worshippers to reflect either upon the growing significance or the fading meaning of those vows.

It is quite a different thing for a congregation to witness the baptism of an infant who may even be asleep while the rite is administered! Or the infant may cry so lustily that the vows taken by the parents and the sponsors can scarcely be heard above the protests of the infant who neither understands nor appreciates this interruption of his regular schedule.

Would we not do much to rescue the rite of Christian baptism from meaninglessness if the practice of infant baptism were discontinued entirely? In its place for the younger children in whose spiritual well-being the Church as the Community of the People of God is vitally interested, let there be a simple service of dedication. Baptism should be reserved for those who have themselves become Believers in the Risen Christ. Then it would truly be "an initial or initiation act" in which the baptized individual would himself intelligently participate.

Were this to become the practice throughout the Church, the temptation to stick the rite of baptism at the point in

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the worship service where it least interferes with the regular order of worship would be no more. On occasions when Believers wish to receive baptism the service of worship would be centered around this rite. Perhaps it should come after the sermon as a part of the total act of dedication by the entire congregation.

With the practice of infant baptism, the thought still persists (in spite of much careful work on the part of the pastor to prevent it) that the rite of baptism administered to the infant is sufficient to make him a Christian when he becomes an adult, even though he seldom or never comes to church again until he is ready for marriage! In the minds of many, infant baptism is also a necessary precaution to insure the safe arrival of the infant in the next world, should death occur before maturity is reached. Baptism administered only to those who have confessed their own faith in Christ would eliminate most of the superstitious and magical connotations that are now associated with it.

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Communion

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then really expecting him to enter into discussion as to the deep spiritual significance of the Eucharist. Very evidently Dr. Coe believes that there is something more to the Communion than thinking of the historical Jesus, but just what that something else is, was not clearly stated. (I hope his concluding article will bring light on the subject.)

The way I look upon the Eucharist, I think that we have reached the very heart of the matter when we acknowledge the presence of the Lord at the Table, and look upon the bread and wine as means of grace, which we become partakers of, not merely by the mechanical function of the ceremony, but as we by faith take of the Lord's Supper. All Congregationalists may not agree with me, but I believe in the substitutionary death of Christ and I think that death makes the Communion what it is—a means of grace.

Let me try and simplify my thinking of the Communion. The people in our Churches will not grasp complicated philosophical explanations of what happens the first Sunday of each month when the deacon passes the bread and wine to the worshiping congregation. But if we can give them something clear, simple, and yet profoundly spiritual and biblical, they will find that coming to the Lord's Table can be a real spiritual experience. Some of the deepest things in my own life have happened when I have sensed my oneness with the Lord and with the fellowship of believers, who, though they are many, are partaking of the same spiritual Altar.

Here, then, is a summary of my thinking:—

1. By partaking of the bread and wine, we proclaim the death of Christ. We proclaim it as an historical fact. We assure ourselves, that Jesus died for ME. When we pass it along to our fellow-believer, we tell him in that act, that Jesus died for YOU.

2. The Apostle Paul says that the bread and the wine are the participation of the body and blood of Christ. When I accept the death of Christ as substitutionary, I understand that by faith, through the means of the visible symbols of that death, I can accept the forgiveness of my sins, and the total redemption of my life.

3. Dr. Coe put it very well, when he called the Eucharist "the Pledge of Heaven." The Apostle Paul used the words "till He come." The Communion is merely a temporary institution. We walk by faith and not by sight, and the means of grace are also aids to faith—until the DAY of Christ.

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